DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 381 489 SP 035 820

AUTHOR Rafferty, Cathleen D.
TITLE Impact and Challenges of Multi-Site Collaborative Inquiry Initiatives. Professional Development Schools: Changing the Work of the School of Education.
PUB DATE 14 Feb 95
NOTE 19p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (Washington, DC, February 12-15, 1995).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Action Research; *College School Cooperation; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Inservice Teacher Education; *Partnerships in Education; *Professional Development Schools; *Research Projects; Research Proposals; *Schools of Education; Teacher Education Curriculum; Teacher Educators
IDENTIFIERS *Collaborative Inquiry; *Indiana State University; Teacher Researchers

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the process of initiating collaborative inquiry projects at Indiana State University's (ISU) 10 professional development school (PDSs). It discusses what was learned and charts future directions and projected activities. ISU's Collaborative Inquiry Committee/Team (CIC) established a three-phase collaborative inquiry action plan. During the preparation phase, CIC members were immersed in the inquiry process through mini-projects, and the results were analyzed. During the pilot projects phase, workshops for teachers, pilot inquiry projects, and planning for a teacher researcher conference took place. The final phase, establishing the infrastructure, focused on developing an institutional program for teaching and supporting collaborative inquiry projects at ISU and for expanded and more sophisticated collaborative inquiry projects at the PDS sites. The paper includes summaries, in table format, of the projects undertaken from spring 1994 through spring 1995. Analysis of the program's progress suggests that: (1) collaborative inquiry appears to flourish more readily in elementary and middle schools than in high schools; (2) more support has been provided for PDS faculty than for ISU faculty; and (3) in general, collaborative inquiry projects became more sophisticated over time. Up to $400 was available to support each collaborative inquiry project. The paper concludes with the call for proposals and the proposal screening criteria. (Contains 12 references. (IAH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 381 489

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES OF MULTI-SITE COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY INITIATIVES

[Professional Development Schools:
Changing the Work of the School of Education]

by

Cathleen D. Rafferty, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Curriculum, Instruction and Media Technology
Indiana State University
Terre Haute, IN 47809
(812) 237-2958 Phone
(812) 237-4348 Fax
ESRAFFE@BEFAC.INDSTATE.EDU Email

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
C. Rafferty
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting
of the American Association of Colleges
for Teacher Education
Washington, DC
February 12-15, 1995

SP035820

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES OF MULTI-SITE COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY INITIATIVES

School-university partnerships have created rich opportunities for informing teaching and learning at all levels. At Indiana State University this has meant simultaneous nurturing of ten professional development schools (five elementary, one middle school, and four high schools). A previous paper explored perspectives, issues, and experiences related to initiating collaborative inquiry across multiple levels and sites (Rafferty, 1994). This paper will draw upon some of the same background but will also report results/impacts attributable to recent collaborative inquiry-related initiatives. In addition, it will chart future directions and projected activities.

Background

Fiscal constraints have resulted in new configurations and ways in which universities do their work. During Spring 1992 when the ISU Board of Trustees voted to close the university school, the School of Education (SOE) responded by extending an invitation to local schools to join in partnership as Professional Development Schools (PDS). PDS sites often operate under various tenets or principles (e.g. Holmes, 1990; Rafferty, 1993) and schools affiliated with Indiana State University are no exception. The following description and principles guide collaboration between ISU and ten affiliated PDS sites:

> A professional development school is a regular elementary, middle, or high school where public school and university personnel work together to facilitate higher levels of learning by all children in the school, to promote a better school environment for

preparing teachers and other educational professionals, and to create a more supportive site for renewal of and inquiry by experienced teachers, administrators, school service personnel, and university faculty. Through the collaborative efforts of pupils in the school, community members, pre-service educators, practioners in the school, and university faculty, a PDS becomes an exemplary learning environment in four respects:

1. A PDS uses effective curricular, instructional, and administrative practices to help ensure that all students reach their full potential as students and as persons.

2. A PDS provides for renewal, professional growth, and continuing education of all participants.

3. A PDS serves as a site for pre-service educators to work in a stimulating learning environment with outstanding practioners. In general, it allows prospective teachers and other educators-in-training to experience the full range of responsibilities of practioners in their professional fields.

4. A PDS supports inquiry, research, and exchange of professional knowledge.

All of these principles are intertwined and mutually supporting but it seems that the fourth component in particular has much potential to help ensure that other elements occur. By that I mean, engaging in inquiry/research provides opportunities for renewal, professional growth and continued learning about the most effective curricular, instructional and administrative practices to help ensure student learning while creating a stimulating learning environment for prospective educators. In essence, then, collaborative inquiry can be viewed as a form of professional development that also informs our practice.

I tend to interchange the terms collaborative inquiry and collaborative action research because both contain similar elements described by Oja and Pine (1987): 1) research problems are mutually defined, 2) school and university collaborate to seek solutions to school-based

issues, 3) findings are jointly reported and are used to solve mutually defined problems, 4) school faculty develop research skills and university faculty (re)discover field-based methodologies, and 5) faculty from both cultures are professionally renewed (p. 97). Furthermore, I feel that this type of inquiry can be subsumed under Freire's concept of praxis as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (1970) primarily because a major focus of this type of inquiry/research is to inform participants about classroom and school practices so that appropriate decisions can be made and action taken to improve teaching and learning.

ISU's Efforts to Promote Collaborative Inquiry for Praxis

During 1992-93 a group of school and university representatives, with approval of the PDS Steering Committee (the governing body that oversees PDS activities), established a definition or description of collaborative inquiry. In light of our newly established school-university relationship, I now recognize that we made substantial progress by completing this seemingly simple task during the first year of our collaboration. At the time, however, I must admit that I was frustrated by our inability to begin any actual projects. However, Calhoun and Glickman (1993) also documented similar issues and dilemmas in their multi-site League of Professional Schools.

During 1993-94 the existing PDS Collaborative Inquiry committee merged with a newly established group under Project UNITE (Urban Network to Improve Teacher Education.) This realignment, which also brought additional human and monetary resources,

resulted in a revised definition of collaborative inquiry and a call for proposals for inquiry projects (See Appendix A). During Spring 1994 we received applications for 7 collaborative inquiry projects which are described in Table 1 below. Funding was available for an additional 3 projects, but in year two of our collaboration it was still not possible to involve all 10 PDS sites.

Clift, et al. (1993), Sagor (1992b), and Veal, et al., (1989) document the importance of variables such as leadership, work environment, collaborative work patterns and organizational culture, and norms of experimentation on reflection and inquiry. Table 1 reveals that 6 of the 7 initial proposals involved either an elementary or a middle school site. Three factors are probably responsible for this pattern: 1) ISU's elementary program more readily accommodates blocking of courses which in turn permits faculty to spend substantive time at PDS sites, 2) the elementary PDS sites are smaller resulting in better communication, and 3) it has been my experience that high schools are typically more difficult to involve in new projects or initiatives. This is likely attributable to their size and departmental structure. At any rate, during Spring 1994 the Collaborative Inquiry group at ISU (10 SOE faculty members) developed a more proactive plan to involve additional faculty at all PDS sites.

Table 1
COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY PROJECTS - SPRING 1994

FOCUS	SCHOOL(S)	# ISU FACULTY	# PDS FACULTY
Teaching and Learning Styles	Rosedale Elementary	1	1
Early Literacy Skills	W. Vigo Elementary	1	1
Portfolio Assessment	Chauncey Rose Middle School	1	9
Democratic Schools and Restructuring	S. Vermillion High School	1	1
Teaching Styles	Chauncey Rose, Rosedale, Meadows	1	3
Portfolios and Narrative Assessment	Fayette Elementary	1	4
Participatory Clinical Supervision	Staunton Elementary	3	4

7/10 PDS sites involved in funded Collaborative Inquiry Projects as of Spring 1994.

Collaborative Inquiry Action Plan

The ten-member Collaborative Inquiry (CI) Committee/Team determined that despite 7 successful CI projects, an infrastructure to support collaborative inquiry projects would be necessary for long-range impact. A summary of our four goals and three-phase plan follows:

Four Goals

1. Develop faculty at ISU/School of Education who have knowledge and experience in conducting collaborative inquiry projects.

2. Develop a network of teachers at PDS sites who can assist SOE faculty in reviewing projects, offering support to colleagues, and conducting their own inquiry.

3. Systematically provide regular training in collaborative inquiry.

4. Establish essential resources to conduct qualitatively superior projects (e.g. outside consultants, workshops, materials, computer resources, etc.)

Three Phases

1. Preparation - Immerse Collaborative Inquiry Team members in the inquiry process via mini-projects and analyze efforts with experienced consultants.

2. Pilot Projects - Offer workshops Fall 1994 aimed at informing teachers of the purposes, processes, and skills of conducting action research; continue pilot inquiry projects; and plan for Spring 1995 Teacher Researcher Conference.

3. Establishing the Infrastructure - Develop and institutional program for teaching and supporting collaborative inquiry projects in SOE and at PDS sites for expanded/more sophisticated collaborative inquiry projects during 1995-96 and beyond.

The CI Team met periodically during Spring 1994 to discuss books and articles related to action research/classroom research/collaborative inquiry (e.g. Hubbard and Power, 1993; Sagor, 1992a; Whitford, et al., 1987). Several CI members also engaged in either mini-projects or PDS-funded CI projects. Busy schedules precluded numerous meetings, but at least a few received feedback and support from their SOE colleagues. The Preparation Phase was underway.

Phase 2, or the Pilot Projects Phase, began during Fall 1994. Additional funds available through an endowment (Adams Distinguished Visiting Scholars) enabled us to employ a consultant (Hilton Smith, Director of Research and Inquiry for the Foxfire Network). In October he conducted an action research/collaborative inquiry workshop for PDS Steering Committee members and other teachers from the PDS sites. Shortly thereafter, we initiated call for proposals for the second round of Collaborative Inquiry Projects. In addition, prior to the submission deadline, several CI Team members hosted a preliminary screening, question and answer session which, while not well attended, nonetheless helped a few groups submit successful proposals. Table 2 summarizes Fall 1994 CI Projects.

Table 2
COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY PROJECTS - FALL 1994

FOCUS	SCHOOL(S)	# ISU FACULTY	# PDS FACULTY
Constructing a Collective Vision	W. Vigo Elementary	1	Entire Staff
Meeting School Improvement Goals	W. Vigo Elementary	1	4
Peer Mediation Conflict Resolution	S. Vermillion High School	2	3
Inclusion and CDO	Meadows, Fayette, Staunton, S. Vermill.	1	4
Portfolio Assessment	Chauncey Rose Middle School	2	8
Systematic Immersion in Advanced Spanish	S. Vigo High School	1 Doctoral Student	1
Impact of Increased Common Planning on Collegiality, Teaching & Learning	Meadows Elementary	2	2
Early Literacy Skills	W. Vigo Elementary	2	1

8/10 PDS sites involved in funded Collaborative Inquiry Projects as of Fall 1994.

As a result of activities conducted Fall 1994 one additional site (another high school) was added to the list of PDS sites involved in CI Projects. To support work in progress from both Spring and Fall 1994, Hilton Smith returned in late November for a morning session with

teachers and administrators from 5 of the 8 PDS sites with funded projects. In addition to 12 PDS participants, 3 SOE faculty and 1 doctoral student were also in attendance. Unfortunately, only 2 CI Team members were able to participate. Nonetheless, Phase 1 activities continued and Phase 2 had begun. As coordinator of this effort, however, I wondered whether there was more we could/should be doing to both promote and support this initiative.

At the beginning of Spring semester 1995 I distributed a survey to CI Team members to solicit their perceptions of progress toward our Action Plan goals and phases. Seven of ten members responded. Survey results indicated that most CI members felt that more progress was made toward building knowledge and support for PDS faculty than for SOE faculty. It was also noted that only a small number of CI Team members had regularly participated in either team meetings or CI-related activities such as Hilton Smith's sessions.

In mid-January 1995 Hilton Smith returned for the third of four scheduled visits during 1994-95. Initially we had planned another half-day workshop for PDS teachers. Unfortunately, when four new local school board members were seated in early January 1995, they established a policy prohibiting retroactive board approval for staff development activities. As a result, we scheduled a strategy session with principals and central office personnel from school corporations with PDS sites to apprise them of action research/collaborative inquiry opportunities, especially for purposes of developing a proactive response to inevitable challenges to various school improvement initiatives. Central office

personnel from all four school corporations and nine of ten PDS principals or assistant principals attended the session conducted by Hilton Smith. In addition, he also met with CI Team members to analyze survey results and determine next steps.

Prior to Hilton Smith's return we had issued a final round of Collaborative Inquiry Proposals for Spring 1995. Eight projects had received funding during Fall 1994 making it possible to support two additional projects at $400.00 each. Three were submitted, and through some creative financing, all were funded.

Table 3
COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY PROJECTS - SPRING 1995

FOCUS	SCHOOL(S)	# ISU FACULTY	# PDS FACULTY
Math Manipulatives, Students' Attitudes and Performance	Chauncey Rose Middle School	1	1
Impact of a Teacher-Initiated Discipline Program	W. Vigo High School	3	6
Competency-Based Mastery Learning and Students' Attitudes	N. Vigo High School	1 Doctoral Student	1

All 10 PDS sites involved in funded Collaborative Inquiry Projects as of Spring 1995.

As of January 1995, we have at least one funded CI Project in each of the 10 PDS sites. It is also noteworthy that each round of proposals brought increasingly sophisticated projects. By that I mean that everything from the quality of writing to the connections with

the school's PDS vision/mission to data collection and analysis plans were clearer, more focused, and more precise. We would like to think that this trend is at least partly attributable to workshops and other activities sponsored by the CI Team.

Table 4 provides a summary across CI Projects funded Spring 1994, Fall 1994, and Spring 1995.

Table 4
COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY PROJECT TOTALS

SITE TYPE	# PROJECTS	TOTAL # ISU FACULTY	TOTAL # PDS FACULTY
Elementary PDS			
Fayette	2	2	5
Meadows	3	4	4
Rosedale	2	2	4
Staunton	2	4	5
W. Vigo	4	5	32
Middle School PDS			
Chauncey Rose	4	5	18
High School PDS			
N. Vigo	1	1 Doctoral Student	1
S. Vigo	1	1 Doctoral Student	1
W. Vigo	1	3	6
S. Vermillion	3	4	5
TOTALS	23	31	81

Total number of projects and faculty involved is slightly less than numbers displayed above because several projects involve faculty at more than one PDS site.

Several observations can be made from this summary. Generally, there are more CI Projects at elementary PDS sites than others. Earlier I explored the reality that the structure of the elementary teacher education program may be at least partially responsible for this phenomenon. Also, it is interesting to note that in 1/2 of PDS high schools no projects involve tenure-track faculty and only one of the high school projects involves tenure-track faculty who prepare middle school and high school pre-service teachers. The nature of the secondary education program may be a contributing factor but additional variables may also be responsible.

We have made considerable progress since defining and describing Collaborative Inquiry in 1992-93, but much work remains before CI is institutionalized at both the PDS sites and within our teacher education programs and faculty at ISU. The last section will explore projected efforts.

Future Directions and Initiatives

As previously stated, we now have at least one CI Project in all 10 PDS sites. However, nearly three-fourths of the projects occur in the elementary and middle school sites. Also, survey results indicated that most CI Team members felt that more had been done to support PDS faculty than SOE/CI faculty. Consequently, four types of activities are planned for Spring 1995: 1) a CI Bulletin Board, 2) CI Team meetings to continue readings,

discussions, and support for inquiry projects, 3) linkages to a new PDS Documentation agenda, and 4) an April CI Conference.

Beginning in early February 1995, we will post descriptions of various CI Projects as well as names and contact information to encourage all SOE faculty to begin dialogues about inquiry and research occurring in PDS sites. This display, located in the faculty lounge/mailroom, will be updated periodically as projects move through different phases.

We have also re-established regular meeting times on a bi-weekly schedule to read and discuss books and articles related to action research/collaborative inquiry. In addition, these meetings will also provide a forum for faculty engaged in CI Projects who wish support and insights from colleagues.

During Fall 1994 a group of SOE faculty drafted a plan to systematically document the PDS initiative. At each PDS site, at least one faculty member will take responsibility to interview PDS faculty and administrators and possibly other stakeholders as well. Once the documentation effort is underway, it seems likely that we might be able to establish CI study groups at each PDS site to support both documentation and inquiry.

Hilton Smith will return in late April 1995 for his final visit to participate in a Teacher Researcher/Collaborative Inquiry Conference. Already a number of SOE faculty and their PDS co-inquirers have expressed interest in participating. Plans are far from complete, but the conference will feature both completed projects and works in progress in a variety of formats

such as roundtables, symposia, poster sessions, etc. We hope to involve PDS faculty, pre-service students, and participants from other local schools as well.

This conference, like many other opportunities since our school-university collaboration began in 1992, will be a new endeavor for many Western Indiana educators. Undoubtedly we will all learn much from this experience. We have come far in the three years since ISU's Board of Trustees decided to close the university school and I thank them for pushing us to explore other options. The result has been, and will continue to be, a powerful learning experience for us all.

References

Calhoun, E.F. and Glickman, C.D. (1993). Issues and dilemmas of action research in the league of professional schools. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Atlanta, GA.

Clift, R., Veal, M.L., Johnson, M., and Holland, P. (1993). Restructuring teacher education through collaborative action research. Journal of Teacher Education, 41(2), 52-62.

Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York: Seabury Press.

Holmes Group, (1990). Tomorrow's schools: Principles for the design of professional development schools. East Lansing, MI: Author.

Hubbard, R.S. and Power, B.M. (1993). The art of classroom inquiry. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Oja, S.N. and Pine, G.J. (1987). Collaborative action research: Teachers' stages of development in school contexts. Peabody Journal of Education, 64(2), 96-115.

Rafferty, C.D. (1993). Animal, vegetable, or mineral: What is a professional development school? Contemporary Education, 64(4), 223-225.

Rafferty, C.D. (1994). Promoting multi-site collaborative inquiry: Initial efforts and challenges. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Sagor, R.D. (1992a). How to conduct collaborative action research. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Sagor, R.D. (1992b). Institutionalizing collaborative action research: The role of leadership. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Veal, M.L., Clift, R., and Holland, P. (1989). School contexts that encourage reflection: Teacher perceptions. Qualitative Studies in Education. 2(4), 315-333.

Whitford, B.L., Schlechty, P.C., and Shelor, L.G. (1987). Sustaining action research through collaboration: Inquiries for invention. Peabody Journal of Education, 64(3), 151-169.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY PROJECTS

Collaborative Inquiry: Our Definition

Collaborative Inquiry represents a variety of research methodologies selected to answer our questions concerning education at the public school and university level. Examples of these methodologies would be surveys, interviews, classroom observations, analysis of student work, as well as more quantitative techniques. All PDS stakeholders, including public school teachers, students and administrators, ISU students and faculty, can participate. It may address concerns such as educational strategies, learning styles, implementation of site-based management, classroom management, effective reading techniques, or any other investigation relevant to teaching and learning.

Collaborative Inquiry is both practical and relevant to teaching and learning at all levels. This form of inquiry mutually benefits our partnership in education by addressing common concerns and questions related to all learners in the partnership. It should enhance and inform PDS sites, IN2000 schools, and ISU's restructuring efforts.

Proposal Format

As a way to promote and support collaborative inquiry the Professional Development School Committee announces the availability of grant monies. Collaborative teams of school and university faculty are encouraged to apply for this support by submitting the following information. Maximum length: 6 pages.

1) Names, school addresses, phone numbers of collaborative inquiry team.

2) Description of the project focus/inquiry question with projected time-line, data gathering and analysis plan.

3) Explanation of the relationship of inquiry to PDS vision and restructuring efforts (i.e. IN2000, PBA, etc.)

4) Description of plan to disseminate findings to colleagues and ISU students. Upon project completion each team will submit a written and oral report to PDS Steering Committee including an accounting of grant monies.

5) Projected budget*

(*Maximum funding per project will be $400.00)

SCREENING CRITERIA
COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY PROPOSALS

Proposal #_____ Year_____ School_____

(Either check a space or circle a rating using a scale of 1 - 5 with 5 representing the highest. Please total at the bottom and include written comments.)

___ ___
Yes No

1) Proposal provides names, school addresses, phone numbers of collaborative inquiry team members.

2) Proposal provides the following:

1 2 3 4 5 Project focus and inquiry questions are clearly stated.

1 2 3 4 5 The proposal's timeline indicates when various phases will be completed.

1 2 3 4 5 Methods of data gathering and analysis are described clearly and are appropriate for the inquiry focus.

1 2 3 4 5 3) Proposal explains the relationship of inquiry project to the school's PDS vision.

1 2 3 4 5 4) Proposal explains potential of this project to contribute to reform/restructuring initiatives. (IN2000, PBA, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5 5) Plan for disseminating findings has potential for informing colleagues and ISU students.

___ ___
Yes No

6) Proposal includes a project budget within $400.00 maximum.

TOTAL POINTS:_____

Specific comments/feedback: